of its plants with a view to increase their competitiveness and efficiency. Measures taken to improve the performance of RSP include.

(i) Modernisation of Rourkela Steel Plant.

(ii) Intensive cost control drive resulting in saving of about Rs.90 crores in 1997-98 & Rs.209 crores in 1998-99.

(iii) Introduction of Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) for employees in 1998 and 1999 resulting in separation of 3343 employees.

(iv) Market oriented production and product-mix

(v) Improvement in techno-economic parameters such as fuel and power consumption.

(vi) Inventory Reduction by Rs.73 crores in 1998-99.

Losses Suffered by Sail

407. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that SAIL has recorded a loss of Rs.2049 crores during the first 9 months of the current year;

(b) whether this amounts to a massive increase of 156 per cent over Rs.890.2 crores loss last year; and

(c) if so, what are the Government's views on this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) and (b) Yes, sir. The increase in the loss for the first 9 months of the current year is by 130 per cent over the corresponding period of the last year.

(b) Government has recently approved a plan for business and financial restructuring of SAIL with a view to increase its competitiveness and to turn the company on to a path of profitability.

Fund Crunch in Vizag Steel Company

408. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) Whether fund crunch has compelled the vizag steel company to drop one steel melting shop and one of the rolling mills; and

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) If so, the relief proposed to be given to the company by waiving the losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) yes, Sir.

(b) Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL), Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) had submitted a comprehensive turn around proposal for its revival which inter-alia included waiver of losses. The Disinvestment Commission has recommended writing off of the entire accumulated losses of the company, alongwith disinvestment of not less than 51% of its remaining equity in RINL to a strategic buyer. No final decision has yet been taken on these recommendations.

Incidents of Atrocities on Tribals in M.P.

†409. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether maximum number of incidents of atrocities on tribals have taken place in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) Whether Government have any special role in the prevention of atrocities;

(c) If so, the details of atrocities on tribals in other States, alongwith Madhya Pradesh from 1998-99 to till date; and

(d) Whether any concrete initiative has been taken by Government in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JUAL ORAM): (a) Law and order is a State subject. However, there are 105 number of cases which have been registered in Madhya Pradesh in 1999.

(b) In pursuance of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, Central Assistance is released to the State Governments on 50:50 basis and to Union Territory Administrations on 100 per cent basis to support measures undertaken by them for effective implementation of the Act, which includes the provision of legal aid, appointment of officers for initiating or supervising prosecutions, setting up of Special Courts and Committees, conducting periodic surveys, indentification of untouchability/ atrocity prone areas and providing relief and rehabilitation to the victims dependents.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.